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EVALUATION OF POPLAR TENTMAKER POPULATIONS ON A COTTONWOOD PLANTATION AT PROFIT ISLAND, LOUISIANA

by

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A biological evaluation of poplar tentmaker, Ichthyura inclusa Hübner populations was conducted at Profit Island, Louisiana, on August 7, 1981, by Neil Overgaard. He was assisted on the evaluation by Butch Labauve, Forester, from Trans-Match Corporation. The evaluation was a follow-up to an evaluation conducted in June, 1981 (Overgaard and Jeane, 1981).

The purpose of the evaluation was to estimate poplar tentmaker populations and predict the extent of future defoliation by the caterpillar.

METHODS

One branch was sampled from the mid-crown of each of 10 randomly selected trees in a 300 acre cottonwood plantation. Numbers of poplar tentmaker larvae on each branch were counted. The following criteria were used to determine potential defoliation:

Number of larvae/limb	Expected % defoliation
< 20	0 - 39
20 - 40	40 - 59
41 - 50	60 - 79
> 50	80 - 100

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Only one tentmaker nest containing 14 larvae was found on the 10 limbs sampled for an average of 1.4 larvae per limb; therefore, very little defoliation is expected by the current generation.

A dipterous parasite, Lespesia melalophae (Allen) family Tachnidae, was reared from poplar tentmaker larvae collected during the evaluation in June, 1981.[2/]

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Septoria leaf spot caused by Septoria musiva Peck was causing premature leaf drop in the plantation. No controls are recommended for this disease.

Some trees in the plantation were experiencing top dieback. Cultures showed branch samples were infected with the canker causing fungus Fusarium solani (Mart.) There is no registered chemical control for this disease. Infected branches should be prunned 12" to 18" below where cankers are visible and the prunned material burned. Trees with infected boles should be removed and burned to prevent spread of the fungus to adjacent trees.

The poplar tentmaker is currently in its 3rd generation for the season. Only one more generation of the moth will occur in this area; therefore, due to the current low infestation level no serious outbreak is expected in 1981 and no further evaluations are recommended for this year.

REFERENCES

Overgard, N. A. and K. Jeane, 1981, a Biological Evaluation of Poplar Tentmaker Population at Profit Island, Louisiana. Southeastern Area S&PF, USDA Forest Service, Atlanta, GA. Report No. 81-2-24.